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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS during APRIL and MAY.

THE CLUBS OF MANCHESTER:—

1. The Conservative.
2. The Union.
3. The Albert.

HOLIDAY NOTES:—

1. Wastdale and Christopher North.
2. The Ascent of the Glyder (North Wales).
3. A Walk to Rostherne.

REMINISCENCES OF THE MANCHESTER STAGE:—

6. Actors and Managers.
7. Jim Browne; Marie Wilton.
8. The Leclercqs and the Paynes.

CHURCHES AND PREACHERS:—

The Rev. W. A. O'Connor.
Sunday Evening with the Secularists.
A Morning with the Unitarians (Rev. W. Herford).
A Morning with the Swedenborgians (Rev. J. Hyde).
Taking Holy Orders under Bishop Lee.
A Children's Chapel.

THE DRAMA:—

After Dark at the Royal.
The Amateur Actors at the Athenæum.
The *King o' Scots* at the Prince's.
Miss Bateman.
Mr. Bandmann as Hamlet.
Mr. Phelps.

DESCRIPTIVE AND MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS:—

On the Rialto: The Preston Strike.
Crossing Swords with H.M.'s Inniskillings.
The American Snob.
Widows.
Umbrellas.
A Study of Tennyson.
A Seance with the Spiritualists.
Good Friday on the Bowdon Line.
The Blind Asylum Chapel.
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Lancashire Worthies: I. John Byrom.
Gymnastics Again: Another Death.
Lords and Commons.
May-Day at Knutsford.
The Cumbrian and Westmoreland Wrestlers.
A Book of Confessions.

RHYMES, SONGS, AND BALLADS:—

The Lay of the Law Student.
In an Attic.
The Man Himself (Sensation Music Hall Song).
The Hurt Gold-digger.
St. Patrick's Day.
The Happy Days of Childhood.
The Bank Clerk to his Bicycle.
Sir Wright and the Bey; By our Bab Ballad.
Der Boet's Barty (after Hans Breitman).

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10 Pieces ditto .. .. .. 1s.
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5 Pieces ditto .. .. .. 1s.
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50 Dozen.. .. .. 1s. 9d. "
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HOLIDAY NOTES.

AMBLESIDE AND HARTLEY COLERIDGE.

YEARS have elapsed, no matter how many, since the beauties of the English Lakes were first disclosed to our wondering, town-accustomed eyes. The remembrance of what then seemed

> Apparelled in celestial light—
> The glory and the freshness of a dream,

has never left us, and though memory may invest these early impressions with "the light that never was on sea or shore," which comes not again however we look for it, we have never ceased to cherish an affection for what was then and is still—hallowed ground. Every year, save one, since that time we have at certain seasons turned our backs upon the city, and set our faces, like faithful pilgrims, towards this sacred Mecca. Nowhere else in England, within the same area, is there to be found such a varied combination of natural beauty as here. Go where you will within the charmed circle, you cannot go wrong. Certain centres of attraction there are, however, and chief among these is Ambleside. We must confess to a special fondness for this quaint little town. It was a first love—a love at first sight—and we have remained faithful to it. Here the revelation of monntain glory first dawned upon our vision. At Newby Bridge, where the lake empties itself with the Leven, Windermere is comparatively tame; midway at the Ferry, or Bowness, its loveliness develops and expands; the climax is reached at the Water-head, where the lake washes the reedy shore of a pleasant vale that stretches inland to the mountains that form a glorious background beyond. Fairfield, Kirkstone, High Street, Wansfell, and, towering above them to the left, the Langdale Pikes stand out in giant array. A mile from the head of the lake, on the steep side of Wansfell, is Ambleside, with narrow tortuous streets, and houses perched upon the mountain side in picturesque confusion. Here, in the summer season, come poets, painters, university men, and sentimental beauty seekers of all kinds, crowding its streets with knapsacked pedestrians, post-chaises, and good old-fashioned mail coaches. But around the restlessness of the little place, there is always the calm Sabbath rest of the mountains.

Situate at the threshold of the mountain region, it combines in its scenery the wild and the pastoral. In the low ground are meadows where you may walk ankle deep in grass and flowers, by the margin of streams whose waters, after leaping in torrents from the mountain heights, now sleep in pools and quiet pebbly shallows, or slide smoothly by velvet-moss-clad boulders, until they lose themselves among the water lilies and sedges that fringe the shores of Windermere. The two main feeders of the lake are the Rothay and the Brathay, and, by mutual arrangement in the spawning season, the char go up one stream and the trout the other. Scattered about here and there on these streams or their tributaries, in picturesque situations, are curiously-constructed bobbin mills with old-fashioned water-wheels, and piles of sweet-smelling fir wood garnered from the mountain sides. The rich fertility of the lowlands fades almost imperceptibly, through the pasture lands of the higher levels and belts of pine woods beyond, to the wilder beauty of boulder-strewn heather and pearly grey crags that mark the sky-line of the mountain tops. The houses of the little town straggle out through the vale, many of them belonging to wealthy residents, bearing about them marks of elegance and refinement. For the most part these are built of purplish-grey stone, upon which the moss and lichens quickly gather, and occasionally, on rustic dwellings, ferns may be seen growing up to the very roofs. Near the centre of the valley is the new church of St. Mary, the sharply-defined outline of the spire contrasting strongly with the curved lines of the mountains around. Here, on Sundays in the season, crowded and fashionable congregations of tourists mingle with the dalesmen in their worship, and have the additional enjoyment of listening to a good man who preaches good sermons, and of joining in a well-conducted service. When last we visited the church, an incident occurred which forcibly reminded us of De Quincey. In his *Early Memorials of Grasmere*, he relates a story of two poor peasants, George and Sarah Green, who dwelt in Far Easdale, beyond Grasmere, and who, in a snow-storm, were lost and perished in attempting to cross the mountains to their home from Langdale. Meanwhile, for three days the family of six children belonging to these people were snowed up in their lonely dwelling, unconscious of the death of their parents, and it is of the heroism of the eldest, a girl nine years old, in sustaining the family during this time, that De Quincey relates the story. On the occasion of our visit, an old man was pointed out as the only survivor of the children. He was the youngest of the little circle who suffered this sad imprisonment.

There is enough of natural beauty about Ambleside to tempt the tourist to linger through many a day, but there are attractions of another kind that increase the interest. The lake district is classic ground, and round Ambleside are clustered many literary associations. Before it became the resort of the irrepressible tourist, the lake district was the secluded retreat of authors, and men of genius of various kinds, many of whom dwelt in or near, or were associated with, Ambleside. Wordsworth, who has reflected the natural beauty of the district in his verse, lived at Rydal Mount, not far away, De Quincey, too, had his home for some time of his life at Grasmere, Southey and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, though dwelling at Keswick, were yet associated with the neighbourhood through Wordsworth. Professor Wilson lived at Ellroy, and Mrs. Hemans at Dove Nest. Hartley Coleridge spent the most of his life here, and died at Nab Cottage, which stands on the road to Rydal. All these are now gone. The golden age of the lake poets is passed, and has been succeeded (mainly on their account) by a golden age for innkeepers. Literature, however, is still represented by brave old Harriet Martineau, who, in the decline of her days, has shut herself from the world in the shady recesses of the Knoll, a pleasant, ivy-covered house, that hides itself from public gaze, by the road that leads to Grasmere.

Pleasant we have found it to wander about the little town and its neighbourhood, to loiter on rustic bridge—dive into wooded glens, or climb the hill sides, and recall the men who have made it classic ground. There is the Salutation Inn, where Professor Wilson was wont to call; behind it is a thick copse wood, with velvet turf beneath, and thickly interleaving boughs above, with a brawling stream rushing over a stony bed, which a little way beyond falls down a height of over a hundred feet, and is known as Stock Shyll Force, one of the most charming waterfalls in the district. Farther on than this is a little glade, quite shut in with trees and hills, where the stream flows in deep lucid pools; this was the favourite resort of Hartley Coleridge, who loved the silence, and to wonder what pleasure people could find in that noisy fall. Poor Hartley, the residents of Ambleside still remember him and his erratic modes of life, and strange stories concerning him are still told by those who knew him. If he sinned, it was only against himself. His brother Derwent has lovingly tried, and to our mind has succeeded, in explaining the peculiarities of a nature which seemed by some strange fatality to be doomed to go on sinning and repenting to the last. Hartley idolised his brother. It is said that when Derwent was preaching, whenever a fine passage occurred in his sermon, Hartley would stand up in admiration, and gaze around upon the congregation to see if they appreciated it also. We have before us as we write, some manuscript poems, written by Hartley Coleridge, and which are not to be met with in his published works. One of these relates to the ancient custom of rush-bearing, which we believe is still kept up on the eve of the last Sunday in July, when the village girls walk in procession to the church, bearing garlands of flowers with which to decorate it. It would seem from the following sonnet that the ladies of the district employ themselves in making these garlands.

AMBLESIDE RUSH-BEARING.

> It was a sweet reward for mother's pain,
> A blessing on the hard-wrought father's care,

To see the conscious joy of that young train,
That were so innocently proud to bear
Those pretty offerings,—all so fair to see
Both for their likeness and variety:
Not half so happy were the Scottish ranks
That marched beneath the nodding morning shade
Of Birnam wood, and left the mossy banks
Bare to the sun, as every little maid
And rosy lad that, marching, bore on high
Glad emblems of a bloodless victory.
Such let us deem them. All things are but symbols,
Fraught with all truth which loving hearts can give:
The busy fingers, arm'd with silver thimbles,
May symbolize the hope by which we live;
And more contribute to the Saviour's praise
Than Idumæan palms or Roman bays.

Another poem is curious as showing his political views on the

TEN HOURS BILL.

Alas for poor humanity—distrest
And disappointed when she does her best;
Woe for the poor, when those that would relieve them
From over-toil, of scanty food bereave them;
Sad thing it is, for happy child to dwindle
By twelve hours tendence on the whirring spindle;
And sad it is we cannot stop the wheel,
But we must take a morsel from its meal.
Say, which kills fastest, seers and doctors shrewd,
Too much of labour, or too little food?

Hartley Coleridge, as we have said, died at Nab Cottage, beneath Nab Scar. The fitful fever of his life over, he rests beside Wordsworth, "beneath the yews of Grasmere churchyard, with the Rotha with its deep and silent pools passing by."

A PARLEY ABOUT "PARLEZ VOUS."

THERE are doubtless many of our readers who are able to peruse the prose of Thiers or the verse of Beranger, with considerable ease and even enjoyment, who, nevertheless, have occasionally found themselves utterly unable to conduct an ordinary colloquy in a French railway carriage, or to contend in his own language with a Parisian cabman who was trying to enforce an overcharge. Now the question is, can a person so situated be said to know French? to which we should feel inclined to answer that such a person does know French, but only as he may know Latin or Greek, and that, therefore, to him, all three languages are alike dead languages, and quite unavailable for the purposes of living, talking, active men. The last twenty years, however, have made a wonderful difference in the capacity of Her Majesty's subjects for conversing with those of the Third Napoleon, and probably in another twenty years no educated Englishman, even if he have graduated at Oxford or Cambridge, will fail to speak French with fair fluency, if not with idiomatic grace. The well-to-do fathers of this day will almost be compelled to see to this, even if they do it at the expense of Rex or King, or the suggestive "tupto;" and thus we may not unreasonably prophecy that, by the time the underground railway has connected the Lord Warden at Dover with its brother hotel at Calais or Boulogne, the passengers will have prepared themselves for that great event by speaking indifferently in English or in French.

How to make ready for this desirable era, must be a question of great interest to us all. It has been said that there is no royal road to learning; and even if there were, it might still be said that it was a road which not all royal personages had succeeded in finding. But there is one road direct to the learning of a language, which peasant and prince alike pursue, and in which the latter can have no sort of advantage; we mean the lessons in the science of language which they both receive from their nurses, and from their unlearned and yet most expert playfellows. Whereunto shall we liken the spectacle of a great grammarian—our dearly beloved Lindley Murray for instance—contemplating day by day the structure of etymology and syntax, which little "tippet and sleeves" is unconsciously building up, and which in most instances is symmetrically perfect—perfect at all events in agility, if not in grace of movement. We have not yet solved the question whether ham or eggs had the prior start—at least we think not. Similarly there would appear to be a doubt whether the first start in the science of language was due to an early little boy, or to a preadamite Dr. Johnson. Perhaps, however, we had better permit this speculation to drop, as it seems getting rather warm. But so much we may be permitted to say, that if the early little boys got an unfair start, it has been taken out of their intellectual ribs by the grammarians during all the succeeding centuries.

Any gentleman, therefore, who comes forward to try to teach us a language, and especially that most charming of all languages for the lights and shadows of expression—the French language—and who commences by announcing that for the first few months of his experiment he will say to the great army of grammars "Procul O procul este profani!" must be considered the avenger of the juvenile sufferings of ages. Yet we have the honour of presenting to our readers, old and young, such a Jack the Giant Killer in Mr. Alfred Coignon, of this city, whose little book, called the *French Mastery Manual*, has recently been published. This gentleman, having had considerable experience in tuition in English schools, and having found how hopeless it was to struggle on with the French grammar applied raw to the intellectual stomachs of his pupils, cast about for a substitute for this stale regimen which had wearily starved and not nourished so many youngsters. Mr. Coignon conjectured—and, as we think, very sensibly—that if the grammar must be thoroughly comprehended, its rules must have something to feed on and lay hold of before they can be applied at all—that it is not given to young minds to take the grammar, as we have remarked, in its crude and raw state. A previous investigator in the same direction, Mr. T. Prendergast, whose admirable treatise called *The Mastery of Languages, or the Art of Speaking Foreign Tongues Idiomatically*, we have had the pleasure of reading, and who has the enviable faculty of rendering delightfully interesting a rather dry theme, appears to have struck the key note in Mr. Coignon's mind, which that gentleman does not fail to recognise in his preface to the little volume we are now noticing. In the said preface Mr. Coignon remarks:

"It has been ascertained that a child eight or ten years old does not habitually use more than three hundred or four hundred words in his mother tongue, though he may recognise three times that number; yet, with this small stock of words, he is able to speak intelligently and correctly. So a child who has on this plan thoroughly mastered three hundred or four hundred words of a foreign tongue, has unconsciously acquired all the grammatical constructions and all the sounds of the language, and is in possession of the power of using fluently all the difficult parts of that language which no study of grammar, however perfect, could give even to an adult."

In these few sentences we have, set forth, the whole scheme. To get the first three hundred words of initiatory French, as imbibed by little French boys and girls, concurrently with claret and water, and an earlier beverage still, into the heads of young Britons—to get them imbibed in all or most of their leading combinations, and in those constructions in which they most differ from our own idioms, is the aim of Mr. Coignon's volume. The *Manual*, in fact, contains above three hundred words, given in eighteen primary sentences, which have been divided into clauses, each clause constituting a No., or lesson. There is a detailed plan of the lessons, which, of course, we cannot copy, but which is very clearly and systematically defined. By a reference to the volume itself, it will be found how a few very simple sentences may be turned about and varied, so as to bring into play an extensive range of colloquy on familiar topics. But one thing the author rigidly insists upon, viz., that until one clause be thoroughly mastered, the pupil cannot be permitted to attack a new one. When the new one is attacked, the previous lesson is incorporated with it, and so on to the end of the series; by which time—say within three or four months from the start—the young student is taken to his first header in the French grammar, which, instead of being now a hard and unfamiliar study, is lighted up and made comparatively facile by the previous training in the rhythm and construction of the language. We hope it will be by this time quite unnecessary that we should broaden out the idea of this book any further. The plan is admirably adapted for classes, as the mere repetition of the various sentences must naturally tend to work the sounds and the constructions into the ears and memories of the pupils. The professor's supervision or superintendence is, of course, all essential. He, in his turn, is compelled to be a tautologist—a species of prattling conversationalist within the scope of the lessons—and there cannot,

consequently, be much shirking of the task. On Mr. Coignon's system, failure will mean either that the teacher is careless or that the pupil is —well—we apologise for using the word—a regular muff. Under the present system, it seems almost cruel to blame a youngster for not being able, after two years' so-called French tuition in a British seminary, to ask the price of a railway ticket from Amiens to Paris. Indeed, the aspirations of British parents seem never to soar so high; they scarcely expect their boys or their girls to do anything with the French language. The French language goes into them, and there it remains, in the recesses of their systems; that it should ever come out again is not to be thought of. The British parent pays his money like a well-to-do Briton ought to do, and in paying—"for my boy, sir"—he discharges his soul affluently. So the boy goes to business, and his French goes to pot. But surely this is very lamentable, because, by Mr. Coignon's plan, it may so easily be remedied. It is not our business to puff either publishers or authors, but we cannot refrain from giving what aid may be in our power to an attempt to let daylight into one of the dark places of the time.

Henceforth, let us learn our French and our German and our Italian as we learnt our English—without knowing that a noun or a verb or a participle was waiting to strangle us.

CO-OPERATORS IN BALLOON STREET.

"THE North of England Co-operative Wholesale Society" celebrated, the other Saturday, by a dinner party, the opening of a new warehouse in Balloon Street. It is agreeable to find that the North of England Co-operative Wholesale Society does not disdain the old-world fashion of dining, as an expression of its good opinion of itself. Misfortune has, notoriously, a tendency to spoil one's appetite, and no doubt it is a circumstance based on correct physiological principles, that a piece of good luck or a motive for self-complacency should make one hungry. Being hungry, what more natural than dining. But it staggers merely human creatures a little to find that transcendental persons, who are fired with the fine ambition of redeeming society, are capable of eating and drinking like "your even Christian."

The opening of a new warehouse in Balloon Street is not, perhaps, on the face of it, the sort of achievement to inspire much delirious enthusiasm. The nation is able to regard the circumstance calmly. It is not quite the sort of event which necessitates the cabling of telegrams between the President of the United States and Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria. We can scarcely anticipate that the plenipotentiaries of foreign states will address interpellations to the British Government on the subject of this new building in Balloon Street. This is rather disappointing. At least we should assume it to be disappointing to some of the worthy persons concerned in planning the celebration of the opening of the North of England Co-operative Wholesale Society's warehouse, in that æronautical thoroughfare in the neighbourhood of Shudehill. These romantic committee-men, or whatever other description of functionaries they may happen to be, evidently considered that it would be no more than a suitable testimony to the magnitude of this affair in Balloon Street if the sun had suspended somewhat the monotony of its everlasting journey, by stopping awhile to contemplate with the proper complacency this the latest exploit of the North of England Co-operative Wholesale Society. We do not hear, however, that the solar system went very much out of its way to illuminate the new shop on the Saturday in question; but, after all, the solar system is a very old-fashioned affair, and doesn't know any better. Certainly, there are the Aurora Borealis. We do not know that these northern lights did not stream over the firmament by way of reflecting the brilliance of the co-operation sun newly laid on for the occasion.

Now we want to have a friendly word with Messieurs the North of ——it is a very long title—let us call it the N. E. C. W. S. gentlemen. Co-operation is without doubt an exceedingly good thing, it is a good thing for everybody. It is a serviceable and creditable organisation for a rainy day, for that inevitable season in a workman's life it is a capital family umbrella. It aims to purify the workingman's commissariat. It desires that its tea shall be tea, its coffee coffee, and its molasses of the proper consistency. It goes in for the veracity of trade. Adulteration it cannot abide, and falseness of any kind drives it out of its mind. In the face of such good intentions why is a romantic or demented committee permitted to turn the N. E. C. W. S. into a farce, by an attempt to delude the general public or its own members by a ridiculous printed circular announcing that we know not what parliamentary magnificoes were likely to appear in Balloon Street.

We know that they were only announced as invited to be present, but will anybody believe that the person who caused such circular to be printed did not intend to convey the impression that there was a probability of these personages coming to Shudehill. Was there the ghost of a chance that Lord Derby would leave his gout and the Irish Church Bill to talk over a co-operative dividend of fifteen or sixteen-pence in the pound? Was Lord Stanley likely to do it at this special political crisis? Did anybody out of a strait jacket suppose that the great Sphinx of Her Majesty's opposition would come all the way from Hughenden Manor to endeavour to prevail upon recalcitrant "co-ops." to deal with the new shop in Balloon Street? We like co-operation so well, and admire it so much, that we don't want it to be made ridiculous by wretched little false pretences of the kind to which we are adverting. The man who believed that these great folk would accept the invitation announced in the circular was a fool, and the man who didn't believe that, and yet used the names as decoys was —— not a fool. It is the fate of every decent thing in England, to be ultimately tainted with snobbery; and is it not possible, even of so ostensibly genuine a thing as co-operation, to stand on its own legs, and have some real respect for itself. The fact that some of the men who had created co-operation were there, offering wise and serviceable and veteran counsel, sufficed to rescue the whole business from the contempt which somebody had been foolishly permitted to provoke. We heartily trust that when the North of England Co-operative Wholesale Society opens another shop in Balloon Street or elsewhere, it will take precautions that the affair is free from adulteration.

WHIT-WEEK HOLIDAY MAKERS.

[BY A STAY-AT-HOME PHILOSOPHER.]

CIRCUMSTANCES which would not be interesting compelled me to spend the Whit-week holiday at home. Naturally, this seemed hard. I felt disposed to grumble at the dispensations of Providence, and to regard myself as an ill-used individual. But inquiry and reflection have modified and soothed angry feelings. I have been questioning some friends as to their holiday doings, and am by no means certain that my quiet way of spending the time brought with it the minimum of pleasure. Let the reader judge for himself.

Collins started on Wednesday for a walk through Derbyshire, which should have included stoppages at Matlock and Dovedale. He declares he did not enjoy himself a bit; and the reason he gives is that Stanley and Brown are such disagreeable fellows to go away with. I believe they quarrelled on Thursday morning, and parted in the sulks, each going different ways. Before, they were inseparables; now, they pass each other in town without speaking. Very likely they will never be friendly again. *Their* holiday has not been a pleasant one. Jones went to Knutsford, on Wednesday, with a pic-nic party. He says the dinner and the waiting at the George were vile. The dancing was jolly. But, coming home, he was idiot enough to sit outside in the rain, and, as a consequence, caught a violent cold. He spent the rest of the week in bed, and drank gruel without end. Don't I see that his face is swollen yet? I refrain from insulting him by asking if he has enjoyed his holiday: on the face of things, that looks impossible. I have taken great care of myself, and am as jolly as the proverbial sand-boy Robinson meant to take his wife to the Isle of Man. He imparted to me, in confidence, and with as near an approach to a nautical air as he could assume, that a good "blow" would do him good. I make inquiries on the subject. He looks surly, said he went across and found it "beastly." The boat was so crowded that you could not stir. I fancy that the

"blow" he was anticipating with so much pleasure has been more than he had calculated on, and delicately question him on the point. He has to confess that he is a bad sailor, but thinks that his stomach must have been out of order. The fact is, that Robinson was frightfully ill, both going to and returning from the island. Even yet, he looks as though he had not perfectly recovered. Evidently his way of spending the holiday was not very successful. One friend went to the Lakes. He would have enjoyed himself pretty well if the weather had been decent, but it was wretched; and then, it was so deucedly expensive, you know. Griffin had, in a moment of insanity, agreed to join a party in a Sunday school trip to Bangor. He says he had to get up at half-past two in the morning, and did not reach home until half-past one on the following morning, and has not recovered from the feeling of seediness naturally resulting from proceedings so extraordinary. Enjoy it? How could any fellow enjoy anything after leaving bed at that hour? Catch him doing it again. I had an extra hour in bed every morning! Jowler, a sporting acquaintance, went every day to the races, on each occasion carrying with him an infallible "tip" for the cup. He intended to realise something handsome, and enjoy himself into the bargain. Now he looks gloomy, and confesses that, in consequence of his horses (from some inexplicable reason) not winning, he has lost all the money he had to spare. If the truth were known, he has lost a good deal more. I have had no opportunities of spending money, and my expenses have been infinitely small. Only one person to whom I have talked on the subject can say, without reservation, that his pleasure has been real and hearty. That is little Walton, who has been alone on a fishing excursion in some out-of-the-way corner of Cheshire. He had rainy weather (very good for bottom fishing), capital sport, a pleasant journey, and enjoyed himself amazingly. But the holiday has not left him perfectly happy, for he says it is such confoundedly hard work to settle down to business again after being so comfortable. Even over him I have an advantage: I am quite ready to begin work again.

BIRCH CHURCH.

[THE REV. CANON ANSON.]

ON Sunday evening last, we made another pilgrimage* to Birch Church, Rusholme. We were not the only pilgrims, for we found the little church crowded with worshippers who, like ourselves, had evidently come from at least the distance of "a Sabbath day's journey." These strangers were mostly young men and maidens, and, at no small inconvenience to their own comfort, right cheerfully did the regular congregation inconvenience themselves to take in the strangers. Birch Church is itself so beautiful a building, and its churchyard has so truly a quiet rural charm about it, that the attractiveness is not to be wondered at. Again, unlike most of our churches, Birch lies in the midst of fields, and fields, on fine sunny Sundays, are very tempting places to stray in. A lych gate forms the principal entrance to the churchyard, and here, deeply cut in its timbers, we first read of the grim "wages of sin," and then, to cheer us, we learn how our gaunt enemy may be overcome. Passing over one of the old chapel gravestones, beneath which "lie interred the remains of Deborah, the prudent, affectionate, and pious wife" of an old Rusholme worthy, we stand fairly within the prettiest churchyard in this neighbourhood. The increasing number of upright memorial stones are already encroaching on its effective simplicity. Nothing, to our mind, so much becomes a churchyard as the old-fashioned raised mound of green grass. The stones, however, as a general rule, are Christian memorials. No urns, inverted torches, broken columns, or other semi-heathen symbols annoy the eye and jar upon the feelings. Almost all the dead here lie guarded by the Cross. We like to see Christians stand to their colours.

All the externals at Birch prepared us to expect what may be termed a moderately high service and accessories inside, nor in this were we disappointed. In speaking of St. Mary's, Hulme, last week, we said that the services there were "high or ritualistic;" perhaps the term "Anglican" would have more correctly conveyed their proper definition. In like manner we would describe both Canon Anson, his curate and his church, and his services as Anglican. Only Canon Anson is rather a milder Anglican than is Mr. Woodhouse. The ritualists have left such men as Canon Anson and Mr. Woodhouse far in the wake. Let any who are curious in these matters attend, and then compare even the embryo ritualism of St. Alban's with the services at either St. Mary's or Birch Church, and the distinction we draw will be very evident. Anglicans are content to take the Church of England as it is, and honestly believe in both her and themselves. They believe that they are real priests, and have as high an estimate of their priestly office and powers as has Mr. Mackonochie, but they do not believe in "developments." They think their church is every whit as truly apostolic as that of Rome, and scorn to borrow aught of her ceremonial.

We are wandering, however, from our church. As we said before, the church was crowded. The congregation consisted mainly of the lower middle class. The service was choral, that is, a surpliced choir sung the psalms and responses, and the curate read the prayers in a clear, distinct monotone. The congregation fairly joined in the singing, but of the singing itself we cannot say much. With all Mr. Sedgwick's faults, no church in Manchester can rival St. Alban's for purely congregational singing.

Canon Anson both read the lessons and preached. In conversation the voice and delivery of the worthy Canon are both natural and pleasant, but when he reads they are wearisome indeed to listen to. The curious thing too is, that the least important words are made the most feelingly emphatic. For instance, in giving out a notice for next Sunday, the word "Sunday" is delivered as though all our hopes of salvation rested in that word, and the same way in reading the lessons, the conclusion of each sentence is delivered with the most fervid heart-rending pathos. Still the impression conveyed by Canon Anson is that he is a honest, simple-minded, good man—not great at argument or in disquisition, but yet a man intuitively of gentle life. The sermon we heard was a good one. It was addressed to professors of religion, and was a simple summary and reminder of some of their chief duties, and was specially designed for Trinity Sunday. Here may be noted another peculiarity of churchmen of Canon Anson's school. Their sermons always have reference to the subject of the day. They follow the Christian Year on its rounds.

Before concluding, we must say a few words in praise of the church itself. We do not know who was the architect, but it struck us as being one of Mr. George Gilbert Scott's early works. No other architect, at the time it was built, would have given us both Piscina, Credence Table, and Sedilia, let alone a Turret for a Sanctus Bell. It is really a beautiful little church, though busy churchwardens and their paint-pots have done much to mar its beauties. We saw at a glance that some of our local architects have thought several of its features worth copying. "Better copy than erect your own compositions," we would say to many; but, unfortunately, very few can even copy decently.

*Our first was made in July last, and an account of what we saw and heard appeared in the *Sphinx* for August 1st.

TOWN TALK,

AND THINGS IN GENERAL.

THE thunderous fines imposed on the betting fraternity by Mr. Headlam set one's mouth watering. That new official has already got the town more than his own salary, by the additions which his sentences have made to the borough fund. Would it not be judicious—financially, if not judicially—to remunerate the new city stipendiary by a commission on the money he makes for the town? If we could only insure a constant supply of betting men in the dock, we might become a money-making community, and, instead of levying rates, distribute an annual dividend amongst the citizens.

We lately recommended that the city police should be allowed to grow their whiskers: we have since discovered that they never were forbidden.

We have been informed that the duty of watering the road by the Botanical Gardens—on the neglect of which function we last week

animadverted—belongs, not to the township of Stretford, but to one of the very turnpike trusts which only the other day obtained a renewal of their right to levy black mail on the public from that sage parliamentary committee which gives no reasons for its decisions. So that the public is pestered and plundered, to keep the roads in order, and the roads aren't kept in order after all! This style of proceeding reminds one of the exploits of too many attorneys, whose bill of costs is the only evidence you get of their having done anything.

Is there any reason why the Athenæum authorities should not file a much larger proportion than they do of the numerous papers, periodicals, and magazines which they take in? A file of newspapers is one of Manchester's deficiencies. The Free Library is out of the way, and the Athenæum is the only institution where any large assortment of publications can be seen. The usefulness of the news-room of the latter establishment is greatly diminished by the almost absurd fewness of its files. Surely, all the daily London and local newspapers, and the local weekly ones, at least, might be filed, at little expense, and with great addition to the value of the institution. We commend this idea to the notice of its directors, who, we are sure, will not be above—or beneath—taking any hint that might be useful.

The Reform Club, we understand, has purchased the block of buildings at the corner of King Street and Spring Gardens, and intend either to convert it into a club-house as it now stands, or rebuild it altogether. The rooms of the Reform, unlike those of other clubs, are not open on Sunday evenings.

The admiration we express this day for *School*, earns us the right to say that the duologue comedietta, by Mr. Robertson, entitled *Dublin Bay*, which was lately brought out at the Theatre Royal, is the poorest piece of trash that its author has ever produced. It might, however, be made a little more effective, if it was not quite so carelessly played by Mr. Everill and Miss Mortimer, who do not seem to think it is worth spending any trouble upon. Nor indeed is it. However interesting juvenile attempts by a celebrated author may be to the student, they are most damaging to the reputation of the author; because they let us behind the scenes, and show us the machinery by which his effects are produced; and whose admiration of a beautiful piece of mechanism doesn't receive a shock when first he sees it being wound up? Mr. Robertson ought to have the courage, in deference to his fame, to put his crude juvenile efforts in the fire. Juvenile, we feel convinced that this comedietta is. It shows us some of the workings of Mr. Robertson's mind; and it contains the seeds of several Robertsonian qualities, but the only ones that are at all developed in it are his vicious ones. It abounds in those slight mispronunciations and annoying Dundrearyisms which mar even his best works, and exhibits strongly his fatal tendency to introduce babies and children into his pieces; while that very fact, coupled with the approach of sea-sickness during a sentimental conversation, show the poetic and the ludicrous instincts of the writer before he was able to master them and manipulate them with his present skill. We remember only two good speeches in all the dialogue, and the flatness, feebleness, and crudeness of the whole, set one wondering how on earth Mr. Robertson—if these are the sort of pieces he submitted to managers—ever got possession of the stage.

Notwithstanding numerous remonstrances, the police continue to take gangs of prisoners to the Assize Courts, along the footpath on the north-east side of Great Ducie Street, to the inconvenience of foot-passengers, and the serious detriment of the shopkeepers, on that side of the street. A few days since, we met two of these gangs, one consisting of six, and the other of five prisoners, handcuffed together, and followed by a rabble of men and boys. These, of course, occupied the whole width of the footpath. As there are several back streets almost free from traffic, leading to the courts, prisoners might quite easily be taken by those routes, and much inconvenience avoided.

The offensive illustrated placard to which we referred last week continues to disfigure the walls and hoardings of the city. During Whit-week it afforded an abundant crop of gapeseed to country visitors, particularly women, who seemed never tired of gazing at the portraits of the unfortunate twins. This week the levees of Chang and Eng have been well attended, both in the Free Trade Hall and in the public thoroughfares. The female element among the gapers has largely prevailed. We tremble for possible consequences, to which we can only inferentially allude; but we may observe that, last week, a woman at Leicester was delivered of twin daughters, united together by a similar link to the Siamese band. To the exhibition at so much a-head we submit reluctantly; but, in the interests of our common humanity, we protest against the placards.

SCHOOL.

NONE of his previous plays has Mr. Robertson's musical fancy succeeded in investing with so much poetry as this. Around the simple story of two young guests—one lord, one commoner—of a county magnate, falling in love with two girls—one pupil, one pupil-teacher—at a neighbouring school, he has woven a beautifully dainty web of sentiment; through which, in a silver thread, runs the romance of Cinderella. This idea is suspiciously German, but we will not venture to surmise how far it is to be ascribed to the German original: suffice it, it is there—pervading the whole piece like a musical undertone, and here and there, through unsuspected openings, bursting forth into audible song, and endowing the love-story that envelopes it with the peculiar charm of a familiar melody that breaks out unexpectedly upon the ear. To the grace and tenderness of fancy working in its predecessors—which seem to have found their gentle way into a fuller utterance in *School*—is added an idyllic beauty of which its predecessors own only the germs. In a green glade, beneath the full shine of the sun, chequered by the shade of trees, and to the music of a string of soft-voiced girls, trooping along, the poet sings the birth of a rich lordling's love for a poor pupil-teacher; and the act-drop falls upon the daintiest scene in recent comedy. Under the moon's milder light, and other trees, casting long slanting shadows on the ground, is sung that young love's growth. Far as his shadow stretches above her's, is he above her in the shadowy distinctions of society. Wide as their shadows diverge, do their walks in life. But the shadow of the object that has caused their meeting—which, with true Robertsonian homeliness and quaintness, is a milk-jug—joins their shadows. While they speak, his shortens and her's lengthens. The two shadows merge: they are betrothed.

So plays the music, and so sings the poetry of the story, enveloping it in a soft, sweet atmosphere throughout, but into this the lightning of wit is constantly flashing, about it the thunder of sarcasm is rolling, on to it the lights of contrast are settling, over it the sun of humour is shining, and through it a gentle breeze of cynicism is constantly blowing. When the curtain rises, the sylvan scene is bathed in the cheerful light of poetry, across which flash innocuous gleams of wit—summer lightning only. But soon the air grows sultry with excess of geniality, and the lightning grows more vivid, and the thunder begins to rumble in the distance. All at once, while we are quietly basking in the pleasant sunshine of humour, a forked flash startles us, a rattling peal of satire stuns our ears, and sharp invective hail begins to rattle down. Then, a cynical east wind blows nippingly. But the merry sunshine is too powerful for them. The thunder and the lightning and the wind only clear the air; and presently the sun breaks out again, omnipotent—tempered only by a gentle cynic breeze. But even the sun has to set; and when it has gone down in clouds of laughing light, the tender, sentimental moon—which long since rose, but was eclipsed by its more gorgeous rival—casts down its

softer rays. But that soft light throws dusky shadows on the scene, and a heavy fall of weeping rain washes away the joyful day and ushers in the night. But the night is only a summer's night, after all; and when the morning dawns, the day breaks in poetical serenity. Upon that day the curtain falls, and leaves us to dramatic night—dark, dismal night—illuminated only by the pyrotechnics of Byron, and the lurid furnaces of Boucicault.

The dialogue is written in its author's best style—we might say, his Prince of Wales's style. Terse, crisp, and pointed—abounding in slight natural touches, and sharp hits at men and things. We need only call attention to Mr. Robertson's well-known admirable use of music, and the artistic manner in which he manipulates his little incidents—as when he makes Lord Beaufoy's love be born the moment after he has been inveighing against women. (This speech Mr. Young should not deliver with his back to the audience. By advancing, he would leave free Bella's flight across the stage, as well as by retiring. He commits the graver fault of saying Lord Beaufoy's sarcasms cynically instead of sorrowfully. Lord Beaufoy is a poet, as his love scenes show.) The relations that exist between the second pair of lovers are of a less romantic and more amusing nature than those of the first; and the scene in which their interviews are alternated—as they stroll round the garden—pleasantly contrasts them. While they are thus deliciously occupied, they are detected by the rest of the school-girls. "Well," says one, "I never!" "Nor I," rejoins another, "but I should like to!" Of such touches *School* is full. And it is also full of character. Naom Tijhe, the second heroine, is one of the most entrancing bits of characterisation on the stage. We cannot remember any play that gives so natural a picture of a modern girl. High-spirited, impulsive, pert, and pretty, she is transplanted from life. Indeed, Mr. Robertson's power of understanding and delineating girls—their hearts, and their manners, and their different behaviours in public and in private—is little short of marvellous—in fact, is genius. No dramatist has ever before made the comedy of manners so like life. It is not that the old masters could not, but that the idea never struck them that it would be well to do so. They passed by the little points that now bewitch us with their naturalness as trivial, and, indeed, undignified. Mr. Robertson is the first who is original enough to be struck with the idea that fidelity to nature in small things is just as artistic, and tenfold as popular, as fidelity in great. Seeing that life in the world was often more interesting than life upon the stage—seeing, for instance, that a real girl was fifty times more fascinating than the stilted virgins of the drama—he had the boldness to give shape to his idea, and picture life. By this he proved his genius, and for this alone he merits fame. But, besides upsetting the conventional "two chairs to the front," he has added to the comedy of manners a poetic grace it never had before. This is his great achievement, and it is chiefly this that crowns him prince of living playwrights. First of contemporary dramatists, all who see *School* must own his right to the position, and will pay to his originality the willing tribute of delight.

Full of merits, *School* is full of faults. First and foremost, it scarcely has a plot. This is a fatal failing, and prevents the charming play from attaining to the dignity of drama. Mr. Robertson has never yet constructed a plot, and his growing proneness to adapt what little plot he uses from alien sources is his most grave and ominous defect; seeming to indicate a lack of inventive originality on his part, which—if it exists—will effectually prevent him from achieving the fame of a great dramatist, and will render every piece he may write in the future, as well as every piece he has written in the past—except, perhaps, *David Garrick*—fugitive. We fear, the very delicacy that fascinates us in them makes them too fragile to last. A play that has no plot, however pretty and clever, cannot endure; and if Mr. Robertson does not compose, or at least does not adapt, a better plot than he ever has done hitherto, he will, notwithstanding his wit and grace, be nothing more than an ephemeral playwright, and future generations will not know his name. Thus, what strength *School* has—and it is not strong so much as delicate and tender—does not arise out of a plot with the growth of which it grows, and with the strength of which it strengthens, but "grows with the growth and strengthens with the strength" of sentiment and episode. This, of course, is fatal to the graceful piece as a work of dramatic art. There is little continuous interest in it. It is the telling, not the tale, that delights us. The play—like all the rest of Mr. Robertson's—is a series of artistic pearls, strung together on no stronger thread than good stage-management; and when once dispersed, they must—sad as it is to think it—be lost. The second act—amusing as it is—is altogether an excrescence, and would have found no place in the story, if it had been properly constructed; while the last—though not such a falling-off as Mr. Robertson's last acts usually are—is rendered interesting only by the illegitimately sudden and late development of an incident which the audience has not been led to take sufficient interest in before. The play begins badly, and ends badly. The circumstance—necessary for the poetic grace of the piece—of grown-up girls listening to the story of Cinderella, should have been hurried over as quickly as possible, instead of which it is protracted; and the feeble and irrelevant manner in which the title of the play is dragged in as a tag, renders a modified conclusion desirable. Moreover, the small circumstances of the piece verge too decidedly on the improbable. As regards the dialogue, there is a most important fault. The greater part of it does not concern the story, but is a beautiful mosaic-work of sentiment, and wit, and poetry, and sarcasm, and humour, without a pattern; and when it does concern the story, it strikes upon the ear unpleasantly, as if intrusive. It is jerky, and in paragraphs—as though made up of happy thoughts, jotted down in a note-book, and crammed in—not arising naturally out of a continuous conversation. Moreover, it is marred by too many of those characteristic touches of its author's, which, though one of the distinctive features of his style, are blemishes—those trippings of speech, and suddenly ludicrous turns of expression, which are so conspicuous in Lord Beaufoy's utterances in the moonlight—touches which, during his soliloquy, convey to the spectator the offensive idea that he has sat too long after dinner. These blemishes all spring from Mr. Robertson's high estimation of the dramatic effect of contrast, an artifice the use of which he often makes too palpable. Gross contrast is one of his failings. The presence of that jug during the love-scene is sufficiently delicate to be artistic; but the character of Mr. Krux, a serpent of an usher, is so coarse and obvious a foil to the rest as to be not only not effective, but repulsive, and should have been long since entirely expunged, or greatly modified. The hackneyed remarks upon women's rights, put into the mouth of one of the characters, are worthier of Mr. Campbell Foster than of Mr. Robertson. They are not so trenchant as they might be, and they are not fit to lead up to the admirable sarcasm which follows them. The play, as a play, would be improved by excisions. Mr. Krux, for instance, should be put out of existence; and the second act should be expunged.

In thus criticising the literary quality of the play, we have thought it right to judge of it as acted by the wonder-

ful perfection of the Prince of Wales's company in London. With the remembrance of their inimitable excellence fresh in the mind, it is impossible to help feeling that the version of it given by this itinerant troupe is somewhat colourless. The company is, indeed, placed in a predicament; because, having to act a piece written for special players, it cannot help but try and copy the originals, and copies are never satisfactory. Mr. Craven, as Jack Poyntz, the commoner, acts the best; and, imitating Mr. Bancroft, gives the most consistent and best-sustained imitation of another that can be conceived. Still, it is mere copy, and must be. Herr Narciss Garson played the usher perfectly—this being the only part that is as well played here as in London. Mrs. Sutcliffe, the school-mistress—with a weakness for constantly flinging in the teeth of the kind-hearted old doctor, who has the misfortune to be her husband, the fact of his having danced three times with one young lady, thirty-five years ago—was efficiently performed by Mrs. Dyas. But Mr. Canninge was ill-suited with the doctor's part. Miss Marie Wilton's glorious character of Naomi, Miss Brunton played vivaciously; and Miss Dyas made Bella a tolerable pupil-teacher; but spoke too boldly, and wore an ungraceful hat. Mr. Ray walked creditably through Mr. Hare's superb creation of Beau Farintosh, the county magnate—a short-sighted old fop, who says to everyone the very things he oughtn't, under the impression that they are somebody else; and Mr. Younge, the leader of the company—though, of course, lacking Mr. Montague's exquisite tenderness and sensibility—gave a portrait of Lord Beaufoy that only wanted polish. The company act well together, and show signs of good stage-management; but polish is their great want. Though they act the play with some ability, they do not bring out half its daintiness. You never would imagine, from their version, that it was the lovely poem and delicious piece of music that it is. You could not grow enraptured, as you ought.

Upon the whole, *School* is a most enjoyable performance; and we should recommend everybody not to miss this opportunity of seeing it. As a play, it is crowded with merits. It is replete with points; it is rich in character, it is brilliant with wit, it bristles with satire, it glows with feeling, and it sings with music; but it lacks incident. It is a striking proof of Mr. Robertson's constructive inability. Let him study Sheridan. He has not yet approached the crown of dramatic authorship, whose wearer must be able to write plays in which the incidents, the characters, and the wit all work in harmony—developing into crises an ever-present, always-growing, all-absorbing plot. That Mr. Robertson will ever gain this highest dignity we greatly doubt; but that he will do even better than he has done yet, we do not doubt at all. We do not think that he is yet the master of his powers: his works are immature. He is already green with the bays of the poet, the humourist, the cynic, and the wit, but we yet await his masterpiece.

THE CATHEDRAL ORGAN.

IN one sense, Manchester can lay claim to a cathedral of unsurpassed uniqueness. No other city in Great Britain can boast of a minster whose interior, from top to bottom, is innocent of stone. All is plaster—be it label, moulding, finial, arch, or column—stucco reigns supreme. We do not know any other cathedral which likewise contains skylights and galleries; so perhaps we are too modest in only laying claim to one speciality. Be this as it may, not content with our present disgrace, certain wiseacres are doing their best to still further mutilate the poor building. Forgetting that a cathedral or a church is not a music-hall or an opera-house, these Goths are striving to make the organ the centre of attraction.

"An organ should be heard, and not seen," is an axiom in things ecclesiastical in almost every cathedral, and even parish church, in process of restoration; one of the first steps towards renovation is the removal of the organ, from its usually conspicuous position in the west end, to its proper position, in or near the chancel. The singers are, or ought to be, in the chancel or quire. The organ is for their *assistance:* therefore, the nearer to them the better. An organ in a church must of necessity occupy a very subordinate position. Its use is merely to lead and support the voices of the singers. True, the vanity and ambition of our organists is at constant war with this principle; but, until two blacks make one white, this false position will never become a tenable one. Organists will delight in "gagging." They cannot condescend to become mere accompanyists, though there is as much true art and skill—nay, even more—required to accompany, as there is to play a brilliant, florid solo. Happily, some few organists of the better sort are also true artists. Any of our readers who may have had the good fortune to have been in York Minster during evening service will at once call to mind our meaning. There, though the organ still occupies a false position, blocking out half the beauties of the quire, the organist is gifted with rare skill, and rarer discretion. Stand where you will in the whole minster, the choristers' voices can be heard above all else, while the tones of the organ supply a kind of quaint *sub*-melody, which first mystically meanders among both singers and listeners, "then seems to go right up to heaven, and die among the stars. Never do you hear that painful conflict between choir and organist so common elsewhere. Even in the Roman Catholic church the fiat has gone forth against raised-up organs. Chancel organs and chancel choirs are to be the order of the day. Our Roman friends have in this taken a leaf out of the Ritualists' book, finding that by this means only, can public worship be made truly devotional and congregational.

"At present, the organ is only imperfectly heard," say the friends of change. We are truly glad to hear such is the case. When we want to hear an organ solo, we will go to the Free Trade Hall; but when we go to church, we expect to hear the voices of the choristers, together with those of "the clerks, and such as do sing." The voluntary affords the only opportunity during an ordinary service for any display on the part of the organist, and we are quite content with the capabilities of our organ, as it now stands, for such occasions.

THE CLUBS OF MANCHESTER.

THE CLARENDON.

WE are always chary in our praise of a new institution, for fear lest first impressions should not be justified by subsequent facts. To begin well is one thing; to go on well is another; and the beginning is generally much easier work than the going on. Scarcely was the ink dry wherewith we recorded our visit to the Conservative Club, and expressed our approval of what we, then and there, were told and saw, before the unpleasant truth forced itself on the public mind and our own, that the management of the club was not as it should be, that the committee were more for show than use, that the very popularity of the institution was ruining it, and, in short, that it was fast degenerating into a crowded and badly managed restaurant. All this, too, before it had completed the first year of its existence. While ready, therefore, to join in the burst of praise which from every quarter has greeted the birth and infancy of the Clarendon Club, we add our earnest hope that those who have the charge of it may take for their motto *Respice finem*—"look out for the future;" "think of to-morrow;" "don't be content with merely a good start;" "rear your chickens, as well as hatch them." *Respice finem*—a caution needed by more people than the Clarendon committee. Handsome babies invariably grow up into ugly men. *Absit omen!* May our handsome club-baby flourish to a ripe old age, and still be ever young and beautiful.

It would really seem to have every chance of so doing. Instead of being placed under the management of a big showy committee, abounding in quantity and quality, but practically leaving the work to be done by an overtaxed secretary, and a steward, who may be just or unjust according as time shall prove, the various branches of organization at the Clarendon are committed to a corresponding number of sub-committees. Each of these sub-committees is composed of a few men who understand their work, and do it. Thus, for instance, the house itself is under the charge of a sub-committee composed of five members; the wine-cellar is governed by a sub-committee of six; four gentlemen

look after the cigars; five take care of the library. In all, there are fourteen members on the general committee, including the treasurer and honorary secretary. By this sub-committee plan, every one of these fourteen must do his work, and devote himself specially to some one or two particular objects; while as to the manner of retirement from office, we copy the following from the seventeenth rule of the club, as a hint to all other institutions, be they clubs, city councils, boards of guardians, or parliamentary constituencies:—

The four members who have attended the fewest number of meetings of the general committee during the first year shall retire at the end of the first year; the four members of the remaining eight who have attended the fewest number of meetings during the second year, shall retire at the end of the second year: and four members who have been longest on the committee shall retire at the end of each following year.

The last clause implies that the test of attendance is to be done away with after two years. We hope not. The idea is admirable. Period of office to depend upon attention to its duties, as tested by the number of meetings attended! Would to goodness the same rule applied universally; although, by the way, there are some committee-men whose presence is occasionally a nuisance, as witness the dear inflammatory Doctor who has so assiduously and successfully devoted himself to the welfare of the Blind Asylum Chapel.

The Clarendon has risen from the ashes of the defunct Bridgewater. Some of the members of the old club in King Street consoled themselves under their bereavement by meeting in a neighbouring hotel. We congratulate them on having again found rest for the soles of their feet, and a much better one than they had before. By way of keeping up old memories, the portrait of the Duke of Bridgewater, which formerly decorated the King Street club, is hung up in the news-room of the new building. A club echo says that it has been re-christened, and is now shown to visitors and new members as a true and authentic likeness of Lord Clarendon. Let us hope that some one will be inspired by the joke to present a real Simon Pure to the club. Nothing is more extraordinary in relation to club life in Manchester than the indifference with which four or five hundred men, frequenting a building year after year, will allow its otherwise handsome rooms to be spoilt for want of a little mural decoration in the way of pictures. Of course, there is another extreme, and, after a visit to the portrait gallery at Peel Park, we are glad to sit opposite to a brick wall, and refresh our wearied eyes with blankness. But still, some good portraits or engravings would much improve the Clarendon, as well as every other club-house we are acquainted with.

We have used the term "new building." Strictly speaking, the Clarendon is no such thing. It affords a striking instance of successful alteration. Twenty years ago, the lower end of Mosley Street was lined, on both sides, by doctors' and dentists' houses. Some few of these remain even as they were, but St. John Street is now the medical street of Manchester; while warehouses and banks have taken the place of nearly all the private dwelling houses between St. Peter's Church and the Royal Institution. If we remember rightly, the large house at the corner of Mosley Street and St. Peter's Square belonged to a dentist, whom in early days we were occasionally enticed to visit by promises of a tip, if we behaved well and submitted our teeth to be scrunched out uncomplainingly. This place of torture, and the house next to it, have been thrown into one, re faced, re-arranged—in fact, done everything with, short of being actually built over again. The result is a club which, in every way, deserves the encomiums passed upon it by our local press—and this is really saying a good deal.

Somebody says somewhere that, in order to be properly qualified to describe a place, it is necessary to have dined there. Without admitting the absolute truth of the axiom, it is satisfactory to know that, even tried by this test, we are qualified to pass judgment on the Clarendon Club. We have dined there; and we candidly confess, should be glad to repeat the experiment. We were also conducted over the whole establishment from basement to—kitchen; the cooking being carried on at the top of the building, in conformity with the new and sensible fashion of the last year or two.

The entrance to the club is in Mosley Street. Passing through a tastefully decorated vestibule, we enter the hall, or perhaps lobby would be the better word. It is somewhat dark, receiving its light principally from the library. We are glad to see that the walls are not *spiked* in all directions with hat pegs, after the fashion of the Union and Conservative. Hat pegs there are, but they have an apartment to themselves, adjoining the lavatory, which is just what a lavatory should be, except, perhaps, in point of size. The library—which derives its name more from intention than fact, there being as yet very few books there—is a pleasant room looking out on Mosley Street, St. Peter's Square, and, in a certain sense, on the entrance lobby also. It abounds in windows, and manages to combine light and cosiness to a remarkable degree. Indeed all the three rooms in this angle of the building,—the library, dining room overhead, and billiard room over that again,—take our fancy immensely, if only on account of their cheerfulness. The square gives space as well as light, and from some of the upper windows of the club, there is quite an extensive view (for Manchester) past St. Peter's Church and the Concert Hall down the whole length of Lower Mosley Street. On the other side of the lobby is the news room, supplied with papers, telegraphic notices, and writing materials;—also, adorned with the portrait aforesaid. By the way, at the time of our visit, there appeared to be quite as many papers in the library as in this much smaller and not by any means as inviting apartment. We should think that, for the present at any rate, and until the stock of books is greatly increased, the library might serve for reading room as well, leaving the present news room to be used for letter writing, magazines, or quiet tête-à-têtes.

On the first floor are the dining, luncheon, and smoking rooms. The last, though situated at the back of the house and looking out on high brick walls, manages, nevertheless, to be light and airy. It is nicely fitted up with small marble tables, &c. Most of the members, however, will surely prefer to smoke in the billiard room,—the room of rooms,—to which we shall mount presently after we have finished our dinner. We take only a passing glance into the luncheon room, where an excellent cold "collation" (that is the proper word, we believe,) is laid out, and getting vigorously attacked by some dozen hungry members. Of the dining room let us speak with gratitude as well as praise. We shall always connect it with an admirable dinner, admirably cooked, admirably served, and yet selected hap-hazard from the mènu which was framed in a little wooden stand, close to our plates. We have already mentioned the wine committee. We have now practical evidence of their fitness for office. The arrangements of the room,—the little tables, each just large enough for a cozy party of four, and decorated with cut flowers, or growing plants with large glossy leaves; the silver and glass,—the snowy napkins,—the well-trained and attentive waiters,—the elegance and comfort reigning everywhere,—there! let us not be too complimentary, for fear lest the reader should uncharitably fancy that we are writing immediately after our club dinner, and under the influence of the wine committee aforesaid.

Besides, we want all our largest adjectives for the billiard room overhead, to which we now adjourn. We doubt whether there is anything like it in or around our city. Indeed we may extend our doubt to most other cities out of London. Billiard rooms there are as large, or larger, and equally lofty (though not many), but the generality are shabby, cheerless places, lighted from the top, and with nothing worth looking at except the tables themselves. On reference to actual measurement we find the Clarendon billiard room is nearly forty feet long by thirty wide, and twenty-five feet high in the centre. The roof rises towards a sort of large lantern, surrounded by stained glass, and having the arms of our own and the neighbouring towns emblazoned on the various panes. In addition to one row of windows looking out on Mosley Street, and another on St. Peter's Square, there is a charming little semi-circular window at one end, forming a recess large enough to admit about three people, and a table. Here, leaning back, on the comfortable cushioned seat, we watch the play going on at the two tables, and mingle wishes with our cigar smoke,—wishes that the twenty guineas entrance fee, and seven guineas annual subscription, were duly paid, and we ourselves enrolled amongst the members of the club.

A lavatory, close at hand, with thoughtful consideration for hands which have been leaning on the chalky billiard tables. A card room, where we find this rule posted up:—

All games shall be finally closed at midnight. Each player after twelve o'clock shall pay a fine of ten shillings for every half hour or portion of half hour; and at one o'clock the lights shall be extinguished.

A bed room, the only one which the club has space for at present;—then, up stairs again, the kitchens, with a bewildering array of stoves, stew-pans, and the newest inventions for the newest dishes:—and then—many thanks to our kind host, and we are outside, in sober, business-like Mosley Street, wondering why Manchester has not twenty such pleasant institutions as the Clarendon Club.

G. TWIGG'S Patent Corkscrews. The most powerful ever invented, and being provided with a patent India-rubber pad, which forms an elastic cushion for the neck, they are warranted not to break the bottle. Manufactory: 30, Mosley Road, Birmingham.—Sold by all Ironmongers.

EPIGRAMS.

[FROM GARNETT'S GREEK ANTHOLOGY.]

1.

Menodotis's portrait here is kept;
Most odd it is
How very like to all the world, except
Menodotis.

2.

"I hardly ever ope my lips," one cries;
"Simonides, what think you of my rule?"
"If you're a fool, I think you very wise;
If you are wise, I think you are a fool."

GYMNASTICS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SPHINX.

SIR,—In your columns last week you refer to "the three first nights of the season at the Athenæum Club" as having witnessed three successive accidents. The "nights" you mention must have possessed fantastic powers of discernment, since the members present saw no "accident," or semblance of an accident. There has been *one* slight mishap during the whole season of six months now closed, and that, directly the result not of the use of gymnastic exercise, but simply of folly. A member who persisted in improperly using the "trapeze" as a "swing," was sufficiently foolhardy to sit without holding with his hands. Not before he had been warned, he fell off and hurt himself. Should *this* be one of your "very black list of casualties," if you will consent to dine with our member and actually "witness" the peculiar prostration he evinces at the dinner table after his accident, you will erase his name from the "black list," without further anxiety.

With respect to the dangers of the Gymnasium, it is but fair that a word or two should be allowed, in order the public may hear more than your own side of the question. It must be conceded that owing to the indiscriminate introduction into the gymnasium of a number of mere acrobatic "feats," the laudable use of gymnastics has been to some extent perverted. With the rare exception of those who are unusually vigorously constituted, these forced and extravagant efforts are positively prejudicial, often causing undue stretching, and in fact, inducing the very diseases they are designed to counteract when rationally pursued. But these indiscretions of the rash and inexperienced ought not to bring discredit upon gymnastics and athletics as such. No doubt the sense of danger which injudicious practices always excite has interfered with the more general adoption of these exercises. And this is greatly to be regretted, inasmuch as, with ordinary judgment, all real risk may be obviated. Still, it must be remembered, that under no circumstances can hardiness be obtained without *some* peril, and the chances of danger are singularly insignificant in the gymnasium when compared with the daily risk in travelling, or riding, or even in hunting, boating, skating, swimming, cricket, football, and other manly sports. And what sensible man will abstain from these recreations because of a few contingencies which due care can usually prevent.

Many will heartily join you in condemning *abuse*—found in the gymnasium and athletic field as elsewhere, and everywhere. Few will be induced to believe that we may not legitimately use our powers, because of the possible abuse resulting from ignorance and mad rashness. —I have the honour to be, most respectfully yours, ONE OF THE COMMITTEE.

Athenæum Gymnastic Club, May 18th, 1869.

[The accidents at the Athenæum Gymnastic Club, the occurrence of which our correspondent denies, we will particularise for his better information. He may not have noticed them, he may have forgotten them, or he may not have been present when they happened—the latter a very likely circumstance if he is a committeeman. On the opening night, a young man, while swinging on the trapeze, had a very ugly fall indeed on to his head and shoulders. On the second night, one of the leading gymnasts of the town made a perpendicular dive, while giant-swinging, from the bar into the mattrass, which he luckily struck with his shoulder, and not his head. And, on the third night, the onerous, honourable, and honorary secretary sprained his wrist—for the second time of late—while jumping. These are the facts, and they cannot be explained away. We may add, that on the afternoon of the very day our article appeared, another serious accident occurred at the gymnasium of the Pendleton Mechanics' Institution, a youth sustaining injuries the marks of which he will probably bear for life.]

TO READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

Communications should be addressed to the Editor, *Sphinx* Office, 37, Oxford Street, Manchester. Every manuscript should bear the name and address of the sender. All contributions are attentively considered, and unaccepted MSS. are returned on receipt of stamps for postage. No replies or MSS. can be delivered on personal application.

Business communications and advertisements should be addressed to Messrs. J. G. KERSHAW & Co., "Main" Printing Offices, 37, Oxford-st, Manchester.

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Only a waste of waters,
Only a tideless sea,
Which is not life, which is not death,
But death in life to me.

Only the years on coming,
Rolling their silent waves
Over the bygone trouble,
Over Life's hidden graves.

Only a drear out-looking
For a hope that is long delayed,
And a weariful prayer for patience,
And a wish that may not be prayed.

Why am I ever watching?
What can I ever see?—
Only a dove that is coming
From a far-off land to me.

Only a branch it is bringing,
Which tells of a clearer day,
And bears me a promise of peace and life,
When the waters have passed away.

F. M. S., in the Spectator.

SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SPHINX.

SIR,—Although I agree with the major portions of your remarks on "Whit-week and Sunday schools," there are one or two clauses to which I beg to call your attention, and which, I think, ought not to be passed unnoticed. If I understand question 8 aright, you are of opinion that, if the Whit-week excursions did not exist, "those parents who very often spend a good deal of their Whit-week in the public house" would, instead, take their children with them into the country. Now I ask how many parents would do this? I assert that if they like drink so much as to spend their holidays in the public house, they would not forego their pleasure in that respect for the sake of their children's society. You ask where else the Manchester system of keeping Whit-week prevails. In answer, I beg to remind you that the Manchester excursions were established to take the Sunday school scholars out of the way of the races, which, as you are aware, are always held here in Whit-week. And although, perhaps, no other place takes so much notice of this season as we do, the Sunday school scholars of other towns have quite as many excursions, &c., during their race week as the scholars here have in Whit-week.—Truly yours,

S. D. L.

Another correspondent, "Verite sans Puer," for the whole of whose communication we regret to be unable to find room, writes as follows:—

For twenty years I was connected with Sunday schools, either as a scholar, teacher, or superintendent, and therefore it may not be considered presumptuous in me to declare, as the result of my experience, my thorough adhesion to the opinions expressed in your article of the 17th inst. * * * * Excursions with all their dangers and their temptations are the natural excrescences of a rotten system, which would soon die out but for these and similar attractions. I have heard parents threaten that if certain privileges were not conceded to their children they would cease to patronise the school, and would *send them to some other*. We tried to abolish trips and teachers' tea parties at a large school with which I was connected, and the result was a collapse. I could easily enlarge upon the remarks in your excellent article as to the evils attending the Sunday school system, and more especially on those which are the direct result of parents delegating to others the supervision of their young men and their young women, in the familiar intercourse which is necessarily induced by many of the arrangements made in the name of religious zeal. Sunday schools are a huge failure, but as they are a great convenience to all sorts of people, they are propotionately overrated. One of the banners in last week's procession bore the motto "Sabbath Schools are England's Glory," and no doubt many people believe so; but, at the risk of incurring their displeasure, I say that "England's Reproach" would be nearer the truth.

QUAKER SHREWDNESS.—A Quaker broker in New York having had a bag of golden eagles (coins) stolen from his counter while he stepped into his back room for a moment, never mentioned the loss to anybody, but quietly bided his time. Several months afterwards, a neighbour being in his office, carelessly asked, "Have you ever heard anything about that bag of eagles you lost?" "Ah, John," exclaimed the Quaker, "thou art the thief, or thou couldst not have known anything about it!" The shrewd old Quaker was right, and the gold was restored with interest.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE.—The real vice of the present drinking trade in England is that it allows the great brewers a practical monopoly of most of the drinking houses, and encourages the immediate source of drunkenness, the sale of adulterated and poisonous beverages. The Legislature will be much better employed in seeing that the popular drinks are wholesome and unvitiated than in attempting to run counter to the natural instincts, and to coerce the natural liberty, of the subject.—*Saturday Review.*

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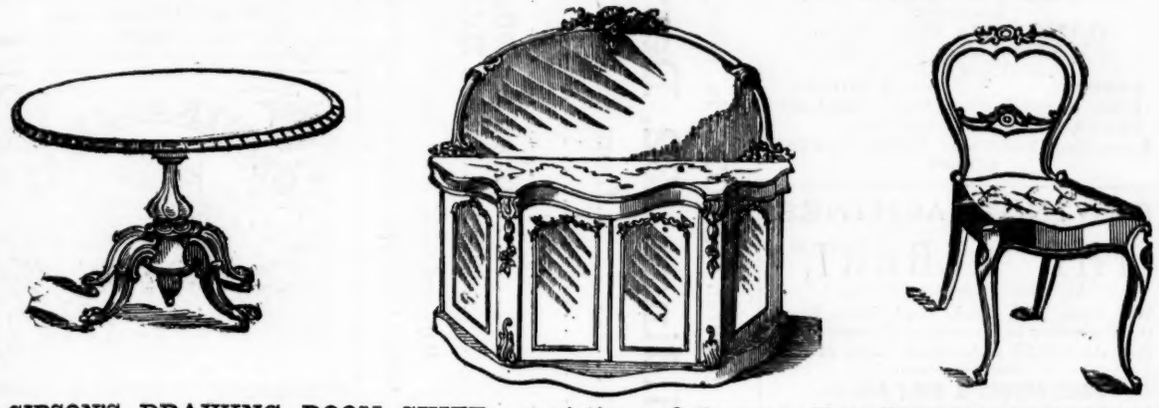

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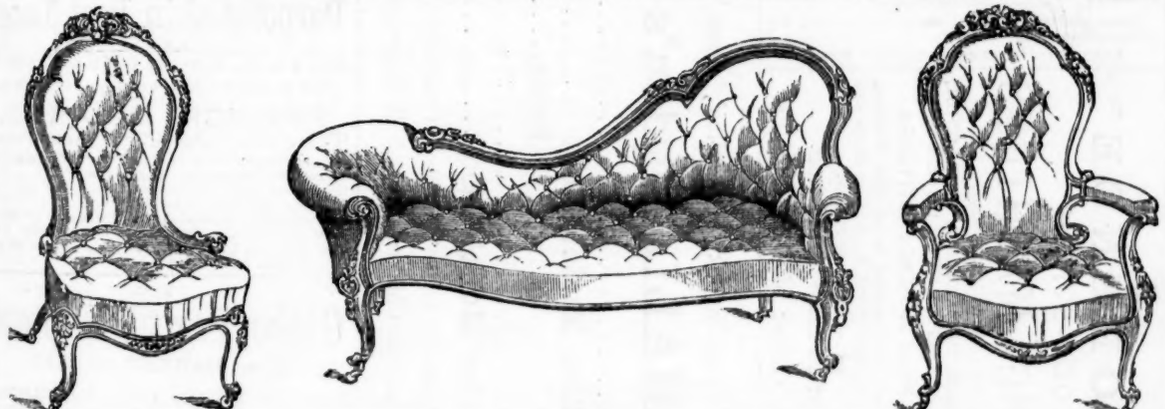

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